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FIRST EDITION OBITUARY.

The Death of the Hon. Thaddeus Stevens.

A Sketch of His Life and Public Services.

His, His, His, His, His, His.

THE LAST HOURS OF THADDEUS STEVENS.

Special Despatch to the Evening Telegraph.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 12.—The Hon. Thaddeus Stevens died at precisely 12 o'clock last night, at his residence in this city, on Capitol Hill. Simon Stevens, Thaddeus Stevens, Jr., a nephew; and his housekeeper, Mrs. Smith, were at his bedside; also Sister Loretta and Sister Genevieve, of the Providence Hospital; Mr. J. Scott Patterson, of the Interior Department; and the servants of his household. He passed away calmly and quietly, and without a struggle.

The death of Mr. Stevens has been looked for at any hour since Sunday. Yesterday he remarked to those around him that he was rapidly sinking, and had no hope of ever resuming his accustomed seat in the Capitol. The calmness and even cheerfulness evinced by him so long as speech was left him, up to four o'clock yesterday afternoon, was remarked by all. On Monday he expressed considerable anxiety in regard to the state of the country, induced mainly perhaps by the current reports of apprehended troubles in Louisiana. He expressed a strong desire that Mr. Johnson might abstain from any measures of a character calculated to disturb the public tranquility, and hoped that no necessity might arise for the reassembling of Congress in September. Yesterday afternoon he conversed with great cheerfulness and animation, talking on a variety of topics, and evincing a lively interest in that which interested those around him. In conversation with Mr. Simon Stevens, about the same time, he referred to Mr. Everts, the new Attorney-General, in terms of marked kindness and confidence. He continued to grow feebler during the afternoon, and at about 4 o'clock P. M. he lost the power of speech, and from that time lay quietly, without giving any indications of suffering. About ten minutes before his death, sister Loretta requested the permission of his friends to perform the baptismal rite, and no objection being offered, the ceremony was performed amid impressive silence. To her who performed this, the act undoubtedly appeared one of great importance, and the earnest and affectionate devotion with which it was done strongly affected those who witnessed it, even those holding a different faith from hers. It is worthy of note that the sisters, whose benevolent works had been so heartily seconded by the great departed in his legislative efforts, and lending his legislative efforts in behalf of the institution to which they were attached, Providence Hospital, visited him daily during his illness, and manifested a devotion which showed how fully they appreciated the charitable and beneficent spirit which has marked the life that was drawing so rapidly to a close.

This morning, Dr. Shaffenfist, of the Army Medical Museum, embalmed Mr. Stevens' body. No definite arrangements have been made as yet for his funeral and the removal of his remains to his home in Pennsylvania. A large number of personal friends called at his late residence this morning; among others being Senator Sumner.

THE LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES OF THADDEUS STEVENS.

Just as the clock struck twelve last night Thaddeus Stevens expired. In poor health for months past, his death would at no time during a year have greatly surprised his friends. And yet such was the iron will of the man, so bravely and stoutly did he combat the encroachments of physical decay, that he appeared elevated above the ills that flesh is heir to, and the announcement of his decease has created as profound a sensation as if the hand of death had fallen upon a man in the full vigor of middle life. Immediately after the adjournment of Congress for the recess Mr. Stevens began his preparations for a visit to his iron furnaces in the western part of Pennsylvania, after which it was his intention to have made his customary summer sojourn at Bedford Springs, and then to have resorted to his home at Lancaster for a few weeks of retirement and repose. Before he could put this plan in execution he was suddenly prostrated, and for a few days his life was again despaired of. Rallying again, he again began his preparations for departing from the capital, but only to be arrested by the sudden summons which is no respecter of persons, which pays no regard to the wishes of those whose will is a law unto their fellow-men. The last hour of the illustrious statesman is described as one of perfect tranquility. Surrounded by his physicians and the members of his household, he passed peacefully away at the midnight hour, and to-day there is a blank in the page of history.

Thaddeus Stevens' Early Life.

Thaddeus Stevens, the son of Joshua Stevens and Sarah Morrill, was a native of Vermont, having been born in the town of Danville, Caledonia county, in that State on the 4th of April, 1792, and had therefore attained the age of seventy-six years and four months at the time of his death. After due preparation he entered the University of Vermont, at Burlington, remaining a student at that institution until 1812, when its doors were closed in consequence of the occupation of the town by the British troops. The scene of his studies was then transferred to Dartmouth College, where he graduated in 1814. His parents being in moderate circumstances, he was obliged frequently to intermit his college studies to obtain the means to resume them, and as soon as he had graduated he removed to a more active field, selecting York, in this State, as the starting point in life. He commenced reading law with David Chase, a prominent practitioner at the York county bar, at the same time being obliged, by his straitened pecuniary circumstances, to engage in teaching the borough academy. By day and by night he thus labored in his double sphere, displaying that rare energy and masterly devotion to whatever he had in hand, which was one of the most striking characteristics of his after-life. Notwithstanding the division of his time and studies, he was fully prepared for practice in two years. At the outset of his professional career, however, he found an obstacle in his path. The members of the York county bar, with the design of preventing his admission, had formally resolved that no one should be recognized as a lawyer who had been pursuing any other calling while engaged in preparing for the bar. Mr. Stevens paid little heed to this jealous action, but passed over the border into Maryland in 1816, entered his name for examination, was found fully qualified and admitted to the bar in that State; and with the credentials thus obtained at once presented his claims to admission in York county. They could not reasonably be offset, and he was duly admitted to practice in the State of his adoption at the age of twenty-four. Devoting himself at first almost exclusively to the duties of his profession, in which he achieved a fair reputation and considerable success, several years elapsed before he entered upon that illustrious political career which culminated in his attaining the most prominent position in the councils of the nation.

His Legislative Career.

In 1833 he was elected to the State Legislature from Adams county, and was subsequently returned in 1834, 1835, 1837, and 1841. His career in the councils of his adopted State presents a very marked resemblance to that in the National Congress. At Harrisburg Thaddeus Stevens held the same dominant—almost domineering—position which he achieved in Congress. The politics in Pennsylvania during the decade from 1830 to 1840 were in a frightful tangle, which it is extremely difficult to understand, and still more difficult to unravel to such an extent that those of the present day who were not then living can grasp anything more than their leading points. In their dizzy whirl, Thaddeus Stevens was perfectly at home, possessing as he did, and as he has still more fully exhibited in Congress, the great elements of success in times of intense excitement. He was elected to the Legislature as a Whig; but although he was ever a most uncompromising antagonist of the Democratic party, he encountered for a time a strong opposition in the ranks of his own party, arising from his decided enmity to Freemasonry, and everything and everybody which pertained to it.

His Warfare Against Masonry.

At the beginning of this period the political complexion of Pennsylvania was more decidedly Democratic than that of any other State in the Union. The overwhelming majority by which General Jackson carried the State in 1828 appeared to have given the Democrats a permanent ascendancy in the affairs of the Commonwealth. But about the year 1832 the Democratic supremacy sustained a severe shock in consequence of the anti-Mason excitement. This new issue, as was the case in New York, soon lost its merely social bearing, and assumed all the proportions and importance of a great political question. The most intense and bitter feeling was engendered, and many districts of the State were completely revolutionized by it in their political aspect.

The connection of Thaddeus Stevens with this agitation was the most important point in his early political history. He hated Free Masonry with an intensity which fairly rivaled that of John Quincy Adams, while he opposed it with an earnestness which left the "Old Man Eloquent" entirely in the background. The breach in the Democratic ranks became wider and wider, from 1835 to 1838, and at last culminated in their presenting two candidates for Governor, when Ritner, the anti-Mason Whig candidate, slipped into office between them. Thaddeus Stevens became the leading spirit of Governor Ritner's administration, and was the head and front of a grand crusade against Masonry, in the shape of a legislative inquisition into its affairs. The prosecution was conducted with unexampled vigor, but the defense was equally stubborn, and in the end, successful. Principally through Mr. Stevens' counsel, the most prominent Masons of the State were subpoenaed and summoned to Harrisburg, among them being the late George M. Dallas and the Hon. Joseph B. Chandler, of this city. Men of this standing were put upon the witness' stand and commanded to divulge all the secrets of their organization. This they boldly and emphatically refused to do, and their dignified demeanor and outspoken remonstrances gained for them the victory. For once in his career Thaddeus Stevens was balked in his purpose.

In 1836 he was elected a member of the Convention which framed the State Constitution of 1837, and in 1838 he was appointed a Canal Commissioner.

His Career in the Constitutional Convention.

was a very prominent one. The Convention assembled on the 2d of May, 1837, and from the first Mr. Stevens acquired marked distinction for the broad and liberal views which he advanced on all questions concerning the best interests of the State, assuming the leadership of such of its members as were in agreement with him.

His Advocacy of Equal Rights.

Even at that early day, when to express the slightest sympathy with the colored race was almost equivalent to political ostracism, the oppressed African found in him a determined advocate. On the 9th of June a resolution was introduced into the Convention, providing for the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the expediency of so amending the fundamental law of the State as to prohibit in future the emigration into State of fugitives from slavery; and even of free persons of color. He at once assailed the leaders of this proscriptive movement with all the fire and energy of his soul, and succeeded in defeating the passage of the resolution.

On another point he was equally decided.

When the Convention came to the consideration of the militia system, Mr. Stevens plucked into the exciting debate, maintaining that, in time of

peace, no citizen should be compelled to bear arms; but that, in time of war, every able-bodied man should be required to perform military duty, or pay a monetary equivalent for exemption.

His Champions of the Public School System.

His chief energies in the Convention, however, were devoted to the perfection and advocacy of our present admirable public school system. Governor Wolf, a Democrat, is entitled to the credit of being in the main, the originator of this system; but to Thaddeus Stevens we are indebted for its final triumph. The basis of the school system had been established by an act of the Legislature during Governor Wolf's administration, which closed with the year 1835, nearly two years previous to the assembling of the Constitutional Convention. As soon as it became the law of the State, the opposition which it had encountered from the first was redoubled, and so strong was the prejudice against it that a large majority of the members of the succeeding Legislature were pledged to its unconditional repeal. Their triumph was at hand, when, in the month of April, 1835, Thaddeus Stevens arose in his place and pronounced an oration of unequalled eloquence which turned the tide of opinion and saved the honor of the State. In the course of this masterly effort Mr. Stevens said:—

"In giving this law to posterity you set the part of the philanthropist, by bestowing upon the poor as well as the rich the greatest earthly boon which they are capable of receiving; you set the part of the philosopher by pointing, if you do not lead them up the hill of science; you set the part of the hero, if it be true, as you say, that popular vengeance follows close upon your footsteps. Here, then, if you wish true popularity, is a theater in which you may acquire it. What else could have bestowed such renown upon the public sphere, the political arena, and the arena of oratory? But courage, even with but little benevolence, may confer lasting renown. It is this which makes us bow with involuntary respect at the names of Napoleon, of Cæsar, and of Richard the Lion Heart. But what earthly glory is there equal in lustre and duration to that conferred by education? What else could have bestowed such renown upon the public sphere, the political arena, and the arena of oratory? 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